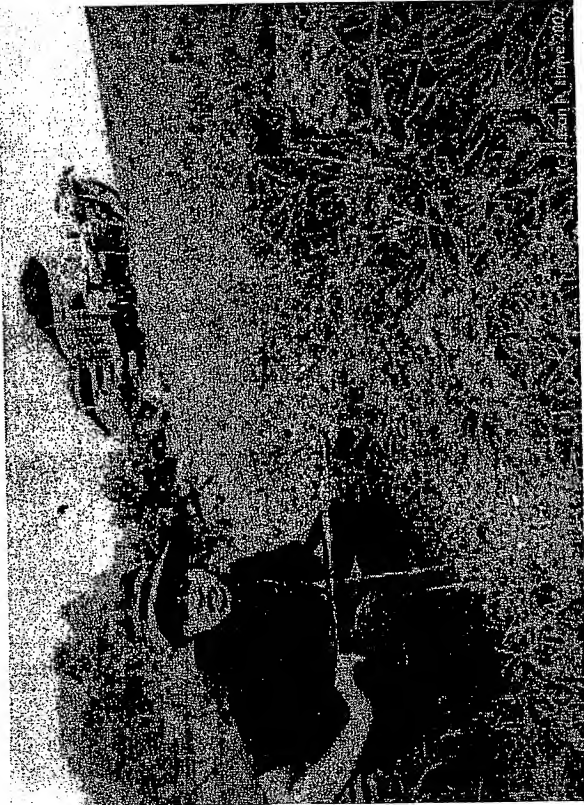




**Either way, it's  
killing us all...**

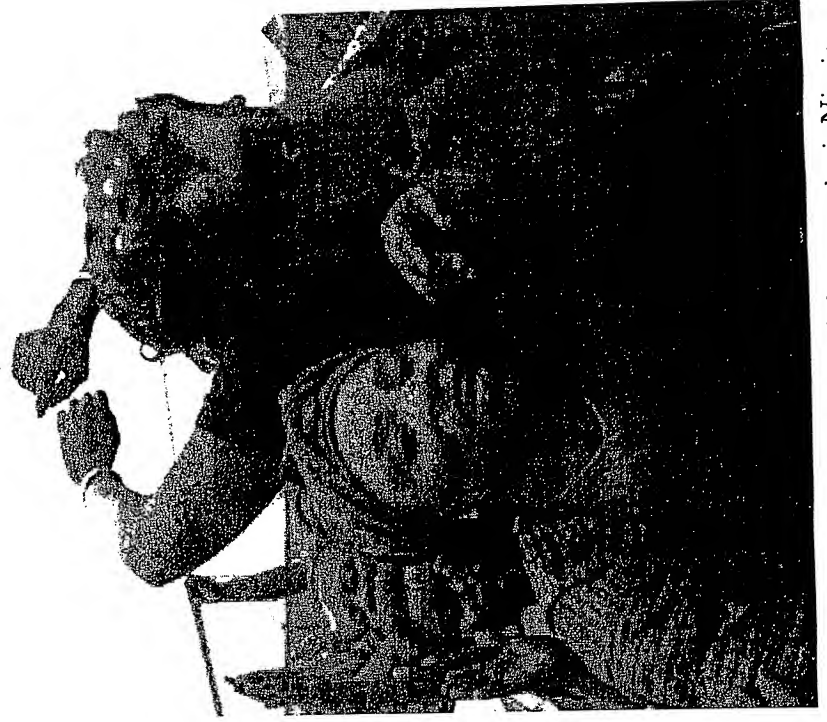
**...it just looks different, depending on where you stand.**



*A young Colombian rebel fighter grimaces as a bullet passes close over her head.*

# **WHERE DOES THE GAS COME FROM?**

Statements from women fighting  
Exxon Mobile in Indonesia  
Chevron Texaco in Nigeria  
and new oil exploration in Colombia



*Oil plant occupation in Nigeria.*

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# Exxon Mobile in Aceh (ah-chay) Indonesia

**Cut Zahara Hamzah, Board Member of the International Forum for Aceh—Made at the 120th Annual Meeting of Shareholders of Exxon Mobil Corporation in Dallas, Texas, USA on Wednesday, May 29, 2002**

Mr Chief Executive Officer, Members of the Board of Directors, Ladies and Gentlemen Shareholders, Good Morning. My name is Cut Zahara Hamzah. I was born and brought up by both my parents amid the noises of the machinery of the liquid natural gas plant and the thick black smoke of the industry related factories. I grew up in a very polluted environment, polluted air, polluted water, in the so-called petro-city of Lhok Seumawe, North Aceh. My house was separated by a high wall of barbed wire from the luxurious housing complex of the staffs of Exxon Mobil, the complex that is named "Bukit Indah", or Beautiful Hill in Indonesian. About a mile behind my house was located the infamous Rancung building belonging to PT.Arun, the Indonesian state company, partner of Exxon Mobil. During the period of 1989-1998, that is commonly known as the DOM period when Aceh was placed under the Military Operation Area, this building was used as a center of torture, rape and execution by the Indonesian military. About 9 miles away from my house is the Exxon Mobil Industrial Complex (Arun Field), where 5 Gas Exploitation Clusters belonging to Exxon Mobil are located. Each of these clusters contain no less than 22 gas wells; and it is around this area that my maternal grandmother and most family members on my mother's side reside.

Mr Chief Executive Officer, Members of the Board of Directors, Ladies and Gentlemen Shareholders, I am here to share with you the feelings of the local residents who have to live in the middle of your giant plant that has been in operation for decades on the land that used to belong to our families from time immemorial. I am going to tell you what really your Company, Exxon Mobil, has given us over the years in return to the riches that it has brought back to you from exploiting our land.

Exxon Mobil started production in Aceh in 1978. During the last decade it has obtained no less than 40 billion dollars from Aceh, and every year since then it has made 2 billion dollars steadily. But what has it given us, the local population, in return? Ever since it started its activities in Aceh in 1971, Exxon Mobil has built roads that interconnect all the Clusters with the other complexes of facilities such as the staff housing complex (Bukit Indah), the warehouses, the maintenance facilities, etc. The problem here is that all these roads are crisscrossing our village and cutting the agricultural site consisting of hundreds of

We think as women that it is crazy that the politics of the Bush Administration in terms of changing the use of the resources to end drug trafficking should be used instead to eliminate the guerillas. As women we believe war is not the answer, that the trainings of soldiers at the School of the Americas, or sending more guns is not going to solve our problems. It is only going to make them more acute.

We believe that the promoting of war is not the answer. But as it stands, around 97% of the resources sent are used for war. Only 3 % are used for development. The problem is not the military or the paramilitaries so much as the disinvestments that has taken place, the lack of social justice, and the disrespect for human beings. It's truly unjust that there is a "Law 121" for African people and agrarian reform, and that when we put forth efforts to try and implement these laws, there are no resources. I could tell you that my organization been touched by the war; Particularly that 3 years ago, one member of our group that was aspiring to be mayor was killed, and 10 women had to leave because of death threats; That we are committed to peace and dialogue with armed actors, and that we fear to do so because these activities are prohibited. "



*Colombian paramilitary death squads have done the dirty work of the elite for over 50 years.*

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*For more information about the roll of oil in Colombia Google search "Oil Rigged".*

*For documentation of the US government's knowledge about it's collaboration with Colombian death squads, see: <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB69/>*

*For a great article on the importance of pro-US forces controlling the international drug trade, see: [www.narconews.com/petras1.html](http://www.narconews.com/petras1.html)*

*For more on Round-Up fumigation: <http://www.tni.org/drugs/research/vicious.htm>*

*For an overview of the impacts of the Colombian war on women, see: <http://www.colombiareport.org/colombia67.htm>*

*The text of Vargas's speech and the Q & A afterwards can be found at: [http://www.portland.indymedia.org/front.php3?article\\_id=9353&group=webcast](http://www.portland.indymedia.org/front.php3?article_id=9353&group=webcast)*

resources.

A little history: In 1957 the [Colombian] government approved the "2nd Law", stating that in lands the black community inhabited, these were considered empty lands, by the Pacific. In 1993 "Law #70 was passed, as a way to correct the law in 1959. In some sections of this Law #70, it states that there will be collective title to the lands given to people of African descent, in essence that no other people will have a right to live in these lands, in an attempt to improve development near the Pacific.

But paradoxically/ironically, when the giving of titles was first happening in 1996, Paramilitaries entered the areas, displacing and massacring people from areas these people live in. When the 1st land title was given collectively to people in N. Choco, next to Panama, the Paramilitaries massacred 38 people and 400 families were displaced. In the Ande[sp?] municipality, quite a few people were killed, children orphaned and families displaced. In the Anton Bahuan Bahu [sp?] in 1997 where the 2nd and 3rd titles were to be given, many massacres and displacements occurred.

And the ones who have committed these atrocities have been the paramilitaries. I am not saying that the guerillas don't intimidate or kill people. But the guerillas and military is not my focus, because the news focus is already only on this, but



*Colombian paramilitaries, funded by the drug trade and the US government, set up road "check-points" around the country.*

the news doesn't cover the paramilitaries actions. And what's curious for us as leaders for the region, is to hear that there are proposals from the U.S. and Colombian governments to have funding increase for really big projects in our area. This does not mean that we are opposed to development in our area, but we are calling for these discussions on these proposals be held in public, with input from the public that will be affected, not behind closed doors, as is happening currently.

And that these negotiations be made in the interests of the people.

And also, in the Pacific, I want to mention that they have discovered not only the greatest biodiversity, but also uranium, petroleum (oil), gold and platinum. And that this flora and fauna that is so precious is being called "the lung of the world".

But in all this, the government at least up to now has paid very little attention to reason. We don't have electricity, the worst roads and despite talk for years to build a hydroelectric plant, this has not occurred. And also we don't have enough food.

hectares of rice fields into separated compartments. The roads cause the closing of the water source to some parts of the fields and destroy the existing irrigational system, with the end result being the loss of livelihood for most villagers who depend on their rice farming.

Mr Chief Executive Officer, Members of the Board of Directors, Ladies and Gentlemen Shareholders,



*TNI troops stand in front of an Exxon facility*

But our suffering did not end there. In 1998, at the fall of the tyrannical regime of General Suharto, we found out that your Company had been financing the military operation in Aceh for a decade since 1989. Exxon Mobil had provided the facilities for the Indonesian military to torture, rape and kill our kinsfolk. It had paid the salaries of soldiers who burnt our houses and robbed our properties. There are of course people who would contest this statement, including naturally the current CEO of Exxon Mobil. But we can give you proofs and eyewitnesses to what we are stating. In fact, worse still, all the atrocities are still ongoing at this very moment. The soldiers are still being paid by this Company of yours and the soldiers are still killing civilians, raping women, pillaging and burning villages around the Exxon-Mobil complex, in the name of protecting your Company. The atrocities continue because Exxon Mobil has legitimized the presence of non-local TNI (national military) troops in Aceh with the excuse of protecting the security of this Company.

It is still fresh in my memory that every night we heard the sound of gunshots and a military van passing by our house and in the morning we would find out who were missing, taken from their houses to disappear forever without a trace. From eyewitnesses we now know that those taken in the middle of the night by soldiers in a van would be blindfolded. The van would go around and around in the village to then stop at Rancong let the passengers down for the execution. The leadership of Exxon Mobil has sought to deny this fact, but when we discovered the mass graves at the Seuntang and Seuruke hills, which are within the Cluster 5 site of Exxon Mobil that was made operational in 1995, such denials have become no longer acceptable.

My husband used to work for Exxon Mobil for 6 years. He related that he and several of his friends were often ordered to repair equipment and vehicles used by TNI soldiers in their military operations. They often found blood splashed all over the equipment and vehicles. When in the end he and his friends were arrested and tortured by the TNI soldier who were based within the Exxon Mobil

complex, the Company did not lift a finger to try to help them. Instead of protesting, the staffs of the Company, in fact, sought to cover up the incident. Such incidents were often repeated at the Exxon Mobil in Aceh. Consequently, the presence of the TNI troops within the Company's premises does not bring the feeling of security to the people, in fact it is the cause of the disturbance of peace and security in the area, including to the personnel of the Company themselves. However, despite knowing such a reality, Exxon Mobil is still until this very



moment giving facilities to the TNI troops to conduct operations into the surrounding villages without caring at all the atrocities that these troops are performing on the innocent villagers. According the data that I have managed to gather, at present there are 82 military posts located in North Aceh, and 21 of them are within the relatively small area of Exxon Mobil. Every post is usually

manned by about 40 to 500 soldiers. For Rancong, especially, there are 1200 TNI troops. Do you, Ladies and Gentlemen Shareholders know what these troops are doing to us villagers? They launch operations after operations into our villages with the pretext of searching the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) guerillas, who are fighting to free Aceh from Indonesia. But in reality, they arrest, detain, torture and make to disappear innocent villagers. They set up roadblocks and extort money from petty traders such as fishmongers passing through the Company's roads. Women and children are not spared. They pillage village shops, confiscate properties at will and they burn houses for the slightest excuse. Each military post imposes monthly "contribution" on petty traders. Chiefs of villages are told to form night watch teams. Saying no to any such instruction is a sure death sentence. Villagers continue to be missing; many are our own relatives, our loved ones. Those arrested and taken away will invariably turn up as corpses the next day on the roadside.

Amongst those victims of kidnap, torture and murder were my own uncle, cousin and brother. My brother Jafar Siddiq Hamzah, was a human rights activist and a permanent resident of the US who used to live in New York. He went back to Aceh in July 2000 to investigate cases of human rights violations that include the involvement of Mobil Oil in giving facilities to the perpetrators of gross human rights violations in Aceh. He was kidnapped in broad daylight in August of that year and a month later his mutilated body was found wrapped in barbed wire. Such a situation has been going on for the last 13 years in Aceh and producing thousands of victims with the related problems of refugees, displaced persons, single parents, widows and orphans. The impunity accorded to the security forces by the State and the lack of international pressure on Indonesia to respect human rights, have geared the TNI towards a real genocidal action in Aceh.

different sectors of society, and the lack of resources for them. The people who work and work are not visible.

The fact that there is government corruption, the fact that the government is carrying out their activities of corruption on the backs of the people, this is not well understood. I'm sure you are aware that there are over 40 million people in Colombia. Of these over 11 million of them are of African descent. And 3 million of these are also indigenous. Many have been displaced within the country. Of these, 50% are of African American descent, scattered throughout many regions, including Bogotá, near Panama, and.... [other places I could not understand ]

At the time our country is facing this war and conflict, the African and indigenous peoples are those that are suffering the most. What is worrisome for us is that the media speaks of the guerillas and the military, but never of the paramilitary.

And in this conflict also we are worried that the Mestisa [sp?] women of African descent are facing the worst, because: 1) their husbands are being killed, 2) their children especially adolescents are being taken to join the military ranks of the warring factions and the paramilitary, lured by the promise of payment, and 3) they are fleeing their homes to become part of the growing ranks of poor people in marginalized communities.... Perhaps some of you have seen the women with children begging with signs that say "displaced".

We are concerned about the fumigation that is taking place in the guise of destroying the coca. The coca is considered to be medicine by indigenous people. What makes coca in a sense poisonous/dangerous is the chemicals that are used to process it. You are well-aware that these chemicals come from the United States. So we don't understand in regards to how the U.S. and our government seems committed to stopping drugs by using chemicals sent by the U.S. to apparently stop coca growing. The coca production has increased 25%.

And as the increase of coca planting takes place and fumigations take place, we see the effects in the destruction of other crops, animals, poisoning of water, children getting skin rashes and being born with deformities.

So we don't see how this policy can be effective in ending of coca production or drug trafficking. We have proposed another way.

Our group, Rural Women Organization, we have proposed to our government what is seen by many to be an idealistic proposal, but that we see as viable; To provide minimal salaries to people so they can survive and plant their own crops. Because coca is how they can feed their family. It seems that the [Colombian] government has paid no attention to our proposal. We think that the farmers have a right to grow coca in order to feed their families at this point.

We don't see it as [being a need for] using different or new resources. Resources are being spent already on fumigation, it is just a matter of redirecting these



# Future Oil Exploration in Colombia



## Nimia Vargas, Network of Choco Women

*US intervention in the South American nation of Colombia has been going on for decades, but was greatly escalated under Clinton. The Colombian government is now the #3 largest recipient of US foreign aid in the world and military aid continues to increase. Though Washington's official reasons for aiding in the militarization of Colombia have ranged from fighting communism, then drugs and now terrorism—oil is a major incentive as well. According to Resource Watch of the Americas, the United States imports more oil from Colombia and its neighbors Venezuela and Ecuador than from all Persian Gulf countries combined. Much Colombian oil is still untapped because people refuse to leave the land above it. The most effective way that has been found to remove them from that land is through a combination of "illegal" para-military death squad massacres followed behind by US trained Colombian "anti-drug" troops and then retired US Special Forces "Private Military Contractors" performing aerial fumigation with Monsanto's Round-Up. These recent efforts have contributed to Colombia's internally displaced population of 2 million people, the third largest number in the world.*

*On March 13th 2002 Nimia Vargas, an Afro-Colombian woman from the state of Choco and co-founder of the Network of Choco Women, spoke in Portland Oregon. Choco may be the most bio-diverse place on earth and is believed to hold significant amounts of untapped oil. "Free Trade" urban sweat-shop zones are also planned for Choco, undoubtedly to be staffed by people like Vargas once they are driven off their rural land.*

*Choco has traditionally been an independently governed black territory, dominated by a large part of Colombia's 11 million people of African descent (out of a total national pop. of 42 million.) Many of Choco's residents are descendents of the "cimarrones," escaped black slaves who set up their own rural villages in co-operation with surrounding indigenous communities. The Colombian government has tried to destroy the ethnic identity of the Afro-Colombian population ever since the abolition of slavery and today black Colombians are by far the most likely group to be subjected to poverty and extreme violence. Thanks go to Laurie for translating.*

*"We are going through a difficult period. This is not a period that involves one or two or three years. What has given rise to the problems we have faced in Colombia is the invisibility of some of the society, the inequalities between*

The international community, that unfortunately includes you, ladies and gentlemen leaders and shareholders of this giant Company Exxon Mobil, seems to be not so concerned with this reality. You are still too eager to cooperate with the Indonesian government in keeping its killing machine, the TNI, well oiled, if you forgive me the pun.

The horrible September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the United States has made the people of this great country, especially the New Yorkers live in panic and in fear for their safety. The families of the victims have to live in sorrow for the loss of their loved ones. We cry with them in our heart, because only those who have experienced such wanton brutality could fully understand the pain. We have been suffering such pain for the last 13 years without any sign of a way out. The TNI has taken the role of the terrorists in Aceh. At this time when the United States as the remaining Super Power has set itself up as the champion of the fight against terrorism, it is very strange that it could, not only tolerate the TNI, but seek to assist this unruly Indonesian apparatus in its suppression of the budding democracy in Indonesia. Exxon Mobil in its turn is working hard to influence the public opinion in this country, that Indonesia deserved further assistance in perpetrating its terrorism in Aceh. Please do understand that for the people of Aceh, the TNI is the state apparatus that has gone berserk and turns into a terrorist group that continues to oppress the innocents in our land.

Mr Chief Executive Officer, Members of the Board of Directors, Ladies and Gentlemen Shareholders, I would like to take this opportunity, to represent my long suffering brothers and sisters in Aceh, to call on all of you leaders and shareholders of Exxon Mobil to lend your ears to our cries of pain. We call on you to stop your Company from hiring TNI killers to guard your premises. We, the poor villagers living around your rich properties in North Aceh, pose no danger to your Company's facilities or staffs. Even the Free Aceh Movement has given their pledges to Exxon Mobil as well as to your Government that they have never attacked your Company and have no intention of doing so. We believe you have the power and the means to stop the atrocities perpetrated by the Indonesian security forces in the name of protecting your Company.

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*The US-based International Labor Rights Fund has filed a lawsuit against Exxon for their activities in Aceh. In July '02 the Bush administration asked the Federal Judge hearing the suit to dismiss it because the allegations might harm Washington's collaboration with the Indonesian government in the "War Against Terror." (see [www.laborrights.org](http://www.laborrights.org))*

*The US Congress cut all military aid to Indonesia in 1999 after TNI troops massacred civilians in East Timor who voted for independence. Though Indonesia's new President told her troops on this year's "Army Day" not to "worry about human rights," the Bush administration has moved to lift the ban on military aid to the TNI.*

*See also [www.tapol.org](http://www.tapol.org) and [www.topica.com/lists/aceh-list/read](http://www.topica.com/lists/aceh-list/read)*

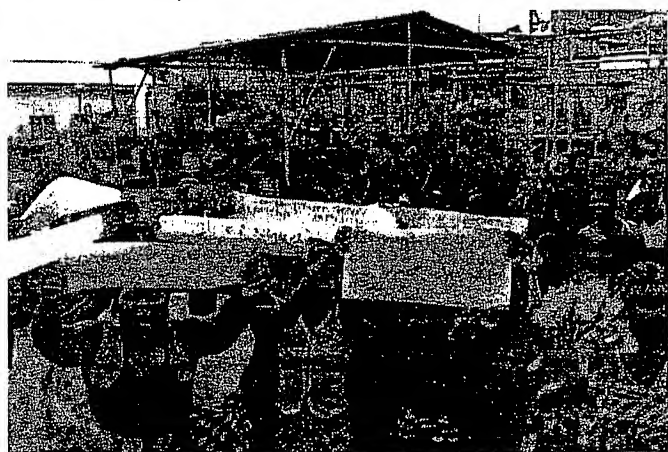
# Chevron/Texaco in Nigeria



**Various statements from participants in all-women's occupations from Project Underground [www.moles.org](http://www.moles.org)**

*For two weeks in July of 2002, thousands of women throughout Nigeria peacefully occupied several facilities of the Chevron/Texaco oil corporation. In the first occupation, the women seized a ferry boat that carried workers to a remote island oil plant in the middle of a swamp. Once there they prevented any further transport off the island and prevented 700 employees from leaving. Nigeria is the 5th largest supplier of oil to the United States. While many of the affected communities are amongst the poorest in Nigeria, the country exports \$20 billion in oil each year. The following are testimonials of women who occupied Chevron Texaco's Abiteye Flow Station:*

"Chevron has neglected us. They have neglected us for a long time. For example, any time spills occur, they don't do proper clean up or pay compensation. Our roofs are destroyed by their chemicals. No good drinking water in our rivers. Our fishes are killed on a daily basis by their chemicals, even the fishes we catch in our rivers, they smell of crude oil. Chevron know the right thing to do, they



intimidate us with soldiers, police, navy and tell us that cases of spill are caused by us. We are tired of complaining; even the Nigerian government and their Chevron have treated us like slaves. 30 years till now, what do we have to show by Chevron, apart from this big yard and all sorts of machines making noise, what do we have? They have been threatening us that if we make noise, they will stop production and leave our community and we will suffer, as if we have benefited from them. Before the 70s, when we were here without Chevron, life was natural and sweet. We were happy.

When we go to the rivers for fishing or forest for hunting, we used to catch all sorts of fishes and bush animals. Today, the experience is sad. I am suggesting

that they should leave our community completely and never come back again. See, in our community we have girls —small girls from Lagos, Warri, Benin City, Enugu, Imo, Osun and other parts of Nigeria — here every day and night running after the white men and staff of Chevron. They are doing prostitution and spreading all sorts of diseases. The story is too long and too sad. When you go tell Chevron that we are no longer slaves, even slaves realize their condition and fight for their freedom."



**-Voice of Mrs. Felicia Itsero, 67, mother and grandmother** (translation from Ijaw by Ms. Fanty Waripai)

"We insisted on dialogue with the oil companies, but the soldiers refused and started kicking us with their boots, they flogged us, they wounded us. As I am talking to you, 3 of our women are still missing. As we are disgraced this way, those of us remaining will go there and let them kill us. We don't want Shell, Chevron, Texaco or any of the oil companies again". -Mrs. Rose Miebi (Widow) 36 years old, mother of six children, an Ijaw.

"I want to say that Chevron is insensitive and callous to our plight. Our problem is caused by them and we are now living in abject poverty. When we protest like this, they just give money to a few greedy individuals and they think that they have solved the problems. We are prepared to die."

**- Voice of Mrs. Lucky Murade, 30-year-old and mother.** (Translated from Pidgin English by ERA's Patrick Naagbantón)



*After two weeks of occupations, the company conceded to a host of demands, committing to build clinics, schools, farms and infrastructure in the places they had toxified. They also agreed to hire men from local communities and set up a \$160,000 fund to help women start local businesses.*

"History has been made," said Esther Tolar, a spokeswoman for the pumping station protesters. "Our culture is a patriarchal society. For women to come out like this and achieve what we have is out of the ordinary."

**For news on women in Africa see <http://allafrica.com/women/>**